

Brief account of the last days of Imam Husayn

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Article

2nd Muharram: Imam Husayn (asws) arrives in Karbala

Ninawa

Imam Husayn (asws) stopped at Ninawa and dismounted His Horse. A rider suddenly appeared from the direction of Kufa carrying arms and a bow hanging over his shoulder. Everyone came to a stop and looked in the direction of the rider. As he approached them, he greeted Hurr (as) and his followers but did not do so to Imam Husayn (as) or His companions. He gave Hurr (as) a letter from Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (la) which said, "Upon receiving my letter, immediately stop the journey of Imam Husayn (asws). Force Him to stop in an area which is open with no protective enclosure or supply of water. I have instructed my messenger to remain with you and not to leave you until you have implemented my orders. Peace be with you."

After reading the letter, Hurr (as) said to Imam Husayn (asws) and His followers, "This is a letter from the governor Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (la) ordering me to stop You in a place which is unprotected. This is his messenger whom he has ordered not to leave my side until I have carried out his orders." Abu Shatha glanced at the messenger of Ibn Ziyad (la) and asked, "Are you Nusair Baddi from the Kinda tribe?" He replied, "Yes."

Upon hearing his reply, Abu Shatha said to him, "May your mother be deprived of you. What kind of message have you brought?" The messenger replied, "What is it that I have brought? I have submitted to my imam and have fulfilled my pledge of allegiance to him." Ibn Muhasir replied, "And in the process of doing so, you have disobeyed Allah and have followed an "imam" which will only lead you towards destruction. You have embraced evil and hellfire. Allah, Almighty and Glorious says,

"We have made them imams, who invite people to hellfire and on the Day of Judgment they will not be helped." (28:41)

This is an appropriate description for your 'imam'.

Hurr (as) began to implement the order and forced the people to stop at a place which was away from the village and with no water supply. Imam Husayn (asws)'s companions would say, "Allow us to stop here (Ninawa) or at Ghadiriyyah or Shahfayyah. Upon hearing the choices of the companions of Imam Husayn (asws), Hurr replied, "No, by Allah, I cannot do this. This man has been sent as a spy to watch over me."

At this point, Zuhair ibn Qayn said to Imam Husayn (asws), "O' Son of Rasool Allah (saw), fighting against these people now, shall be easier than trying to fight against the reinforcements which will join them. By my life, a military force will come which we will be unable to confront." Imam Husayn (asws) replied, "I will not be the one to initiate the fighting against them."

Zuhair said to Imam Husayn (asws), "Come with us to that village and stop there because it is well protected and is near the bank of the Euphrates. If they try to stop us from going there, we can overtake them, for it is far easier to fight them than to overtake those who will soon join them." Imam Husayn (asws) asked for the name of this village and was told that it was called 'Aqr (also known as Karbala). He then said, "O' Allah I seek refuge in You from 'Aqr" and then He proceeded to stop there. This was on Thursday, 2nd Muharram, 61 AH.

From 3rd Muharram until 7th Muharram

Arrival of the army of ibn Sa'ad (la)

The next day (3rd Muharram), Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) arrived from Kufa with 4000 soldiers. This cavalry of soldiers had originally been sent by Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (la) to subdue the people of Daylam in Dastaba. By then, ibn Ziyad (la) had appointed Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) as governor of Raye (present day Bahrain). However, with Imam Husayn (asws) heading towards Kufa, ibn Ziyad (la) changed ibn Sa'ad (la)'s assignment. His instructions to ibn Sa'ad (la) were "Go to Imam Husayn (asws). When you complete this, you may return back to your governorate." Umar Ibn Sa'ad (la) replied, "If you can relieve me of this mission, please do so. May Allah have mercy on you." Ubaydullah (la) replied, "Yes, if you leave the position of governor of Raye." Ibn Sa'ad (la) requested a day to think over the matter.

Ibn Sa'ad (la) asked the advice of his closest friends. Everyone advised him to not undertake this mission. Hamzah ibn Mughirah, his nephew, said to him, "Uncle, I beg you in the name of Allah to not move against Imam Husayn (asws) for it will be a grave sin in the sight of your Lord and violates the bond of kinship. By Allah it would be better to give up all of your worldly wealth and your governorate than to meet Allah burdened with the responsibility of having spilled the blood of Imam Husayn (asws)." Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) replied, "Indeed, I shall take your advice, inshaAllah."

Hisham reports that he went to see Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) after he had been instructed to march against Imam Husayn (asws). Ibn Sa'ad (la) said to him, "The governor has ordered me to move against Imam Husayn (asws) and I refused to do so." Hisham said to him, "May Allah guide you to what is proper and right. Do not accept this mission of war against Imam Husayn (asws)." Then Hisham left him. Someone came to Hisham and said, "This Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) is inciting people against Imam Husayn (asws)." Hisham went to Umar ibn Sa'ad (la). When ibn Sa'ad (la) saw Hisham, he turned his face away from him. Upon seeing the gesture of ibn Sa'ad (la), Hisham understood he had decided to march against Imam Husayn (asws).

Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) went to ibn Ziyad (la) and said, "May Allah make you prosperous. You have entrusted me with the governorship of Raye and the mission against Imam Husayn (asws). People have already been informed of my appointment. If you still consider me suitable, then do this. Otherwise, dispatch an army from the eminent leaders of Kufa. I am not the best candidate to fight on your behalf."

Then he proposed some names.

Ibn Ziyad (la) replied, "Do not try to tell me who are the eminent leaders of Kufa. I am not seeking your advice on who I should send. Either you set out against Imam Husayn (asws) with your soldiers or hand over your governorate." After hearing these words from Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (la), ibn Sa'ad (la) agreed to march against Imam Husayn (asws) with 4000 soldiers. They arrived at Ninawa the next day, 3rd Muharram.

Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) instructed Azrah ibn Qays to go to Imam Husayn (asws) and ask Imam Husayn (asws) why He has come here and what His intentions are. Azrah was one of those who had sent a written invitation to Imam Husayn (asws) and was embarrassed to go to him. Others had also written Imam Husayn (asws) and now faced the same situation, so they refused to go meet Imam Husayn (asws).

In the meanwhile, Kathir ibn Abdullah Shaabi said, "I will go to Him. By Allah if you wish, I will kill Him." Umar (la) replied, "I do not want you to kill Him. Go and ask Him why He came here." Abu Thumamah Saidi spotted Kathir on his way to the camp of Imam Husayn (as). Abu Thumamah said to Imam Husayn (asws), "May Allah make you prosperous, O' Abu Abdullah (asws). The most wicked person on Earth, who has spilled much blood and killed many people, is coming towards You."

Abu Thumamah approached him and said, "Lay down your sword." The man replied, "By Allah, no. There is no cause for that. I am only a messenger. If you will hear what I have to say, I shall tell you. If you refuse, I shall go back." Abu Thumamah said, "I shall hold the hilt of your sword. Then you may convey your message." Kathir replied, "No by Allah you will not hold on to it." Abu Thumamah said, "In that case, give me the message and I shall convey it to Imam Husayn (asws) on your behalf. I will not allow you to go near Him for you are a treacherous man." They exchanged words. Then Kathir returned to Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) and informed him of what had transpired.

Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) called Qurrah ibn Qays Hanzali and said to him, "Shame on you, Qurrah. Go to Imam Husayn (asws) and ask Him what has brought Him here and what He wants." Qurrah began to walk towards the camp of Imam Husayn (asws). When Imam Husayn (asws) saw him approaching, He asked, "Does anyone know him?" Habib ibn Muzahir replied, "Yes. He is from the Hanzalah tribe of Tamim and the son of our sister. I used to know him as a man of intelligence and would not have imagined him being present on the other side."

Qurrah entered and greeted Imam Husayn (asws). Then he conveyed Umar ibn Sa'ad (la)'s message to Imam (asws). Imam Husayn (asws) replied, "The people of your town wrote to Me asking Me to come. If they now do not wish for Me to be here, I shall leave them and go." Qurrah returned to Ibn Sa'ad (la) to inform him of what was said. Ibn Sa'ad said, "I hope that Allah will exempt me from having to declare war on Him."

Letter of Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) to ibn Ziyad (la)

Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) wrote a letter to Ibn Ziyad (la). "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

When I reached Imam Husayn (asws), I sent my messenger to Him and asked Him what was His purpose for coming here and what He wanted. He responded "The people of this town wrote to Me and asked Me to come to their aid. Therefore, I have come to them. Since they are displeased with My presence here and their views differ from what their messengers brought to me, I am prepared to return back."

When this letter was read to ibn Ziyad (la) he said, "Now that we have seized Him in our grasp, He seeks a way out, but now there is no escape."

Response of ibn Ziyad (la) to Umar ibn Sa'ad (la)'s letter

Ibn ziyad (la) wrote the following the Umar ibn Sa'ad (la): "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

I have received your letter and fully understand its meaning. Offer Imam Husayn (as) and His companions the opportunity to pledge allegiance to Yazid (la) ibn Mua'wiyah (la). If They do, then we will determine our decree. Peace."

Upon reading the letter, ibn Sa'ad said, "I had a feeling that ibn Ziyad (la) will not accept a conciliatory posture."

7th Muharram: Imam Husayn (asws) and His followers denied water

Another letter came from Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (la) addressed to Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) "Prevent Imam Husayn (asws) and His companions from reaching the water supply. They should not be allowed to taste a single drop of it – as was done with the righteous, pious, and oppressed caliph, Uthman ibn Affan (la)." As a result, Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) stationed Amr ibn Hajjaj (la) with 500 horsemen along the river to prevent Imam Husayn (as) and His companions from being able to obtain a single drop of water. This was done three days before the battle against Imam Husayn (asws).

8th Muharram: Meeting of Ibn Sa'ad (la) with Imam Husayn (asws)

Imam Husayn (asws) sent Amr ibn Qarazah ibn Ka'b Ansari to Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) to arrange a meeting at night between the two camps. Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) came out with about 20 horsemen and Imam Husayn (asws) a similar number. When they drew near to each other, Imam Husayn (asws) instructed

His followers to withdraw and Ibn Sa'ad (la) did likewise. They spoke for most of the night and then each returned to His own camp along with His followers.

People speculated greatly on what had been discussed between Imam Husayn (asws) and ibn Sa'ad (la). The people said Imam Husayn (asws) made the following proposal to Umar ibn Sa'ad (la), "Let Us go to Yazid (la) ibn Mua'wiyah (la) and leave the two armies." Umar (la) replied, "Then my house will be destroyed." Imam Husayn (asws) replied, "I will rebuild it for you." Umar (la) said, "My properties will be taken." Imam Husayn (asws) said, "I will give you even better properties in the Hijaz." Umar (la) repeated this to Him. Speculation over their conversation was tantamount, but no one had any actual knowledge of what was said between the two.

Second letter of Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) to ibn Ziyad (la)

Umar Ibn Sa'ad (la) wrote the following to Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (la):

"Allah has wiped out mutual hostilities. He has united with us and reformed the affairs of the community. He has agreed to return to where He came from or we can send Him to one of the border areas where He will be treated like any other Muslim with the same rights and obligations, or we send Him to Yazid (la) to offer His pledge of allegiance to him and resolve their differences. This approach will be satisfactory to you – it will be for the betterment of the community."

When Ubaydullah (la) read the letter, he said, "This is a letter from someone who is sincere with the governor and is concerned about the welfare of his community. Yes, I accept his proposal." Shimr ibn Dhi' Jawshan (la) stood and said, "Will you accept this from someone who has halted nearby on your land. By Allah if you allow Him to leave without obtaining His allegiance, He will be considered strong and powerful, and you will be viewed as weak. Do not give up your position for it will be a sign of compromise. Instead, let Them submit to your judgement and then you can either punish Them or forgive Them, as you have full discretion. By Allah, I have been told that Imam Husayn (asws) and Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) sat between the military camps in discussion throughout the night." Ibn ziyad (la) responded, "Yes, you are correct."

Second Letter of ibn Ziyad (la) to Umar ibn Sa'ad (la)

Then Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (la) wrote the following to Umar ibn Sa'ad (la):

"I did not send you to Imam Husayn (asws) to delay confrontation with Him, to give Him ease, to extend Him an offering of peace and life, or to intercede on His behalf with me. Take note that if Imam Husayn (asws) and His followers submit to my authority and surrender, then send them to me. However, if they refuse, then kill them and destroy their dead bodies for this is what They are deserving of (maazAllah). If Imam Husayn (asws) is killed, let the horses trample back and forth on His chest, for He is a treacherous rebel (maazAllah) who has divided the community. This will not do any harm to Him after death, but I have sworn that I would do this should He be killed. If you execute our order then we will reward you

appropriately as one who is obedient. If you refuse, then give up our authority and army and hand over the command to Shimr ibn Dhi' Jawshan (la). We have given our authority to him. Salam."

Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (la) summoned Shimr (la) and said, "Go with this letter to Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) and instruct him to advise Imam Husayn (asws) and His followers to submit to my authority. If They do, then send Them to me. If They do not, then he must wage war against Them. If Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) does this, listen, and obey him. If he should refuse to fight, then you are appointed as the commander of the people. Seize Umar (la), sever his head, and send it to me here."

When this order was handed to Shimr (la), he stood with Abdullah ibn Abi Muhill (la) who said, "May Allah make the governor prosperous. The sons of our sister are in the side of Imam Husayn (asws). If you are in agreement, write them a letter guaranteeing their security." Ibn Ziyad (la) replied in the affirmative and instructed his secretary to write such a letter. It was sent by Abdullah ibn Abi Muhill (la) with his mawla Kuzman.

Shimr (la) arrives with the letter of Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (la)

Shimr (la) handed over the letter of Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (la) to Umar ibn Sa'ad (la). When he read the letter, he said, "Woe unto you. May Allah deprive you of His mercy and make what you have brought unaccepted. By Allah, I believe you have influenced ibn Ziyad (la) against accepting my proposal and as a result, have spoiled our efforts to correct this situation. Imam Husayn (asws) will never submit." Shimr (la) asked, "Tell me what you plan to do. Will you execute the governor's order and do battle with his enemy? If not, withdraw and hand over the command of the army to me." Umar (la) replied, "No, you will not benefit by exploiting this situation. I will execute the order and you will lead the men."

Guarantee of security offered to Abbas (asws) and His brothers

Shimr (la) approached the camp of Imam Husayn (asws) and said, "Where are the sons of our sister?" Abbas (asws), Jafar, Abdullah, and Uthman came out and asked him what he wanted. He replied that he had come to offer them a guarantee of safety and security. The youths replied, "May Allah curse you and your guarantee. What sort of an uncle are you who offers us security while the Son of Rasool Allah (saw) has no guarantee of safety?"

When Kuzman, mawla of Abdullah ibn Abi Muhill (la) arrived, he called out to them and said, "This is the letter guaranteeing your safety that your uncle has sent to you." The youths replied, "Convey our greetings to our uncle and tell him that we are in no need of your guarantee of safety, for the guarantee of Allah is better than the guarantee of a corrupt and evil person."

Umar Ibn Sa'ad (la) marches towards Imam Husayn (asws)

After completing afternoon prayer, Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) called out "O' horsemen of Allah, climb onto your horses." He rode along with them until they approached the camp of Imam Husayn (asws). They saw

Imam Husayn (asws) seated in front of His tent. His sister, Syeda Zainab (sa), heard the army approaching. She went to Her Brother and said "My Brother, do You hear the sound of the army marching towards Us?" Imam Husayn (asws) said "I just saw Rasool Allah (saw) and He was saying to Me, "You are coming towards Us."

Hazrat Abbas ibn Ali (as) exclaimed "My Brother, the people are coming towards us." Imam Husayn (asws) stood up and said, "O' Abbas (asws), I would sacrifice Myself for You. Mount Your horse and go to meet them. Ask them what the purpose of their advance is and what has changed that they now are marching towards Us." Hazrat Abbas (as) along with 20 horsemen, moved forward towards the advancing army. Among those with Him were Zuhayr ibn Qayn and Habibi ibn Muzahir.

Hazrat Abbas (asws) asked them, "Why have you come to Us and what are your intentions?" They answered, "An order has been issued by the governor that we should offer You the choice between submission to his authority or engage you in battle." Hazrat Abbas (asws) said, "Do not rush into anything before I have had a chance to notify Abu Abdullah (asws) of your position." Upon hearing the words of Hazrat Abbas (asws), the advancing group stopped and said, "Go and notify Him. Then come and tell us what He says."

Hazrat Abbas (asws) rushed back to Imam Husayn (asws) to inform Him of what they had said. Habib ibn Muzahir said to Zuhayr ibn Qayn, "Either you address the people or I will. It is your choice." Zuhayr asked Habib to begin the address. Habib told them, "By Allah, how evil will those people be in the sight of Allah tomorrow- those who will be in His presence after killing the Grandson of Rasool Allah (saw) and His Family (asws)."

Azrah ibn Qays replied, "You claim great purity for yourself." Zuhayr said to him, "O' Azrah, surely it is Allah who has purified and guided Them. Be aware, for I am a sincere advisor. Azrah, I implore you in the name of Allah not to be among those who help the misguided ones in slaughtering these Pure Souls." He replied, "Zuhayr, in our view you were not from among the Shia of this Family. You were a supporter of the party of Uthman (la)."

Zuhayr said, "Are you not presumptuous about my affiliations? By Allah, I was not among those who ever wrote to Him letters of support or sent messengers with promises of help. It was only by coincidence that our paths crossed. When I saw Him, He caused me to remember Rasool Allah (saw) and His relationship with Him. I knew well His enemies and your party. Then I reflected and realized that I should help Him and become a member of His party, lay down my life to safeguard His- to preserve the abandoned message of the truth of Allah and Rasool Allah (saw).

When Hazrat Abbas (asws) brought the ultimatum from Umar ibn Sa'ad (la), Imam Husayn (asws) said, "Go to them and if possible cause them to postpone until tomorrow morning so that We may spend the night in supplication to Our Lord. "

Hazrat Abbas (asws) conveyed this message to Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) who asked Shimr (la), "What do you

think of this proposal of Imam Husayn (asws)?" Shimr (la) replied, "Make your own decision for you are the governor and the decision rests with you." Umar (la) said, "If only I did not have to decide." Then he approached the people and asked them for their opinion. Amr ibn Hajjaj ibn Salamah (la) responded, "Glory be to Allah. Even if they were from Daylam and had requested a short reprieve, you would be duty-bound to grant their request." Qays ibn Ashaath (la) replied, "Grant Their request. By my life it is better to commence fighting in the morning." Umar (la) said, "By Allah, if I knew They would engage in battle, I would not delay it till morning."

Imam Ali (asws) ibn Husayn (asws) reports that a messenger sent by Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) came to Them. He stood at a place from where his voice could be heard and said, "We will give you reprieve till morning. Then, if You submit, we will hand You over to our governor Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (la). If You refuse, we will pursue you to the end."

Events of the Eve of Ashura

9th Muharram

Imam Ali (asws) ibn Husayn (asws) narrates that Imam Husayn (asws) gathered His followers after Umar ibn Sa'ad (la) returned to his camp.

Imam Husayn (asws) said the following:

"All praises and glory be to Allah the Most High. I believe tomorrow will be Our last day in this world. I absolve you of any obligation to Me. You are free to leave. Use this cover of night to escape. These people pursue only Me and once they capture Me, they will not pursue anyone else."

Response of the Hashimites

Hazrat Abbas (asws) was the first to respond. "How is it possible that we should remain alive after You? May Allah never allow this to happen." Then his brothers, His sons, sons of Imam Hasan (asws), and sons of Abdullah ibn Jafar, (Aun and Muhammad) all spoke similar words.

Imam Husayn (asws) then said, "O' sons of Aqeel (as), your family has sacrificed much with the martyrdom of Hazrat Muslim (as). I grant you permission to go." They replied, "What would the people say about us if we were to do such a thing? They would say that we had abandoned our Imam, our Master, our Cousin, and the best of Uncles; that we shot no arrows, thrust no spears, lifted no swords in His defense. No, by Allah we will never leave You. We will give our lives, wealth, and family to ensure Your safety. We will fight alongside You until we attain our goal. Life would be so distasteful after You."

Response of the companions

Muslim ibn Awsajah stood and said, "How is it possible that we leave You and then before Allah say that

we have fulfilled Your rights. By Allah, not until I have thrust my spear into their hearts and wielded my sword until only its hilt shall remain in my hand, I will not leave You. If I have no weapon with which to fight, I shall throw stones at them to secure Your safety until my death."

Saeed ibn Abdullah Hanafi said, "By Allah, we will never leave You until Allah knows that we protected the Honor of Rasool Allah (saw). By Allah, if I knew that I will be killed and brought back to life then burnt alive and my ashes scattered, I would not abandon You even if this process were repeated 70 times. How then, could I not sacrifice myself for Your safety when I know that there is only one death with honor which can never be thrown aside."

Zuhair ibn Qayn said, "By Allah, I would love that I be killed, then revived, then killed a thousand times in this manner if it keeps You with the young ones from Your Family."

The other companions of Imam Husayn (asws) all spoke in similar fashion saying "By Allah, we will not leave You. It is better our life and all our being is offered for Your protection. If we are killed, we will have faithfully carried out our oaths."

Imam Husayn (asws) on the eve of Ashura

Imam Ali (asws) ibn Husayn (asws) ibn Ali (asws) narrates:

I was sitting with My Aunt Syeda Zainab (sa) on the eve before My Father was to be martyred. My Father returned to His tent along with Huwayy, the mawla of Abu Zarr Ghaffari (ra) who was preparing My Father's sword. My Father was reciting:

"Time, you are a shameful partner for a friend with the passage of dawn and sunset. How many companions and supporters will be a corpse but time will not be content with any substitute. The final affair rest with the Majestic One for every living being returns back to Him."

He repeated it 2 or 3 times. Upon hearing the words of Imam Husayn (asws), Syeda Zainab (sa) went to Him and said, 'I am an orphan. My Mother has left this world and so has My Father and My Brother and now I am going to be deprived of You My Brother.' Then Syeda (sa) said, "O' Abu Abdullah (as), You are preparing for death. Your life will be brutally taken from You." Upon hearing the words of Syeda (sa) Imam Husayn (asws) went out to His companions and instructed them to bring their tents close together. This way the enemy could only attack them from one direction.

Imam Husayn (asws) brought cane and firewood to the ditch which the companions had dug during the night. Imam Husayn (asws) said, 'When they march against Us, set the wood on fire, so that they will not be able to attack Us from the rear.'

Imam Husayn (asws) and His companions on the eve of Ashura

Imam Husayn (asws) and His companions spent the entire night in prayers and supplicating to Allah. Dahhak ibn Abdullah narrates:

Some from the enemy camp passed by to keep an eye on Us. Imam Husayn (asws) said, ***"And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is better for their souls; We grant them respite only that they may add to their sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement. On no account will Allah leave the believers in the condition which you are in until He separates the evil from the good (3: 178–179)".***

One of those passing by heard the words of Imam Husayn (asws) and said, "By the Lord of the Kaabah, we are the righteous ones." I realized who he was and asked Burair ibn Hudair whether he also recognized that man. He replied "No." I told him "He is Abu Harb Sabee. He is known as a brutal fighter who was imprisoned at the time of Saeed ibn Qays for criminal activities." Burair exclaimed, "O' grave sinner! Would Allah make you one of the righteous?" He replied, "Who are you?" Burair said, "I am Burair ibn Hudair." Abu Harb said, "We are from Allah. Although it pains me to see you killed, but killed you will be." Burair replied, "Abu Harb, will you not repent to Allah for your grave sins? By Allah, we are the righteous ones and you are the wicked. I am witness to this." I (Dahhak) said, "Woe unto you. Have you no knowledge?" Abu Harb replied sarcastically, "May I sacrifice my life for the one who use to be a drinking companion of Yazid ibn Udhrah (la)." Burair said, "May Allah be displeased with you always. You are truly ignorant." Then Abu Harb left.

Morning of Ashura

Umar Ibn Sa'ad (la) offered morning prayers on Ashura and came out with his followers. Amr ibn Hajjaj (la) was given command over the right wing and Shimr (la) over the left. Azrah ibn Qays (la) was given command of the horsemen, Shabath ibn Ribee (la) was given command of the foot soldiers. The standard was given to Dhuwayd (la).

When the Yazidi army (la) began advancing towards Imam Husayn (asws), He raised His hands and supplicated to Allah:

“O Allah, I put My trust in You on all occasions. You are My hope in every difficulty. You are My trust and provider in all affairs.”

They came near Our tents and saw We had lit firewood in a ditch to prevent the enemy from attacking from the rear.

Suddenly a man, riding a horse and well-equipped with ammunition, advanced towards us and without uttering a word inspected the tents. Then he retreated and called out, "O' Imam Husayn (asws)! You

have hastened towards the hellfire in this world before the day of Qiyamah (Allah's refuge)." Imam (asws) asked, "Is he Shimr bin Di' Jawshan (la)"? The companions replied in the affirmative. Imam Husayn (asws) said, "O son of a goat-herderess woman! You are more worthy of it." Muslim bin Awsaja attempted to shoot an arrow at him but Imam Husayn (asws) stopped him from doing so. Muslim said, "Please let me shoot at him, for this wretched man is one of the great oppressors and Allah has made it possible for me to kill him." Imam Husayn (asws) replied, "Do not shoot your arrow, I do not desire that the battle may begin from my side."

Imam Husayn (asws)'s last sermon on Ashura

Imam Husain (asws) possessed a horse named Lahiq, which he had given to his son Hazrat Ali Akbar (as) to ride. When the infantry advanced closer, Imam Husayn (asws) called for his horse and mounted it while calling out in a loud voice:

"O people! Listen to what I say and do not make haste, so that I may fulfill the responsibility which rests upon Me and that I may submit My plea regarding My arrival towards you. Then if you accept My plea and believe My words while giving Me justice, then you shall be fortunate and there will be no excuse for you to fight with Me. And if you do not accept my word and deal unjustly with me, then muster therefore your designs and gather your accomplices, then let not your designs be dubious, then execute on me and give no respite (to me). And verily, my Protector is Allah Who sent down the Book (Qur'an) and He guards the virtuous ones." When His sisters heard His words, They started weeping and wailing, along with his daughters. Imam Husayn (asws) sent his brother Abbas bin Ali (asws) along with his son Hazrat Ali Akbar (asws) to console them.

Then he said, "By my life! They still have a lot more to weep." Then Imam Husayn (asws) said,

"Am I not the Son of the Daughter of Your Prophet? The Son of the Trustee of the Prophet and His cousin. The first one to believe in Allah and embrace what Rasool Allah (saw) brought from His Lord? Is Hamzah (as), lord of the martyrs, not My uncle? Is Ja'far (as), who flies with wings in heavens, not my uncle? Do you not recall the statement of Rasool Allah (saw) regarding Me and My Brother; 'These two are the Lords of the Youths of Paradise'. Then if you agree to what I say, and verily what I have said is nothing but the truth, then it is better, for by Allah, I have never ever spoken a lie. If you do not believe Me, then ask those who are amongst you. They will tell you about Me. Ask Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari, Abu Saeed Khudri, Sahl ibn Saad Saeedi, Zaid ibn Arqam, and Anas ibn Malik. They will confirm that they heard this statement from Rasool Allah (saw). Is this not sufficient to stop you from shedding My blood?"

Shimr (la) interrupted Imam Husayn (as) and said, "I worship Allah only by my tongue and do not understand what You are saying." Habib ibn Muzahir said, "By Allah, I see you worshipping on seventy different kinds of doubt. You cannot comprehend what Imam Husayn (asws) is saying because Allah has sealed your heart."

Then Imam Husayn (asws) continued, "If you doubt these words of Rasool Allah (saw), do you also doubt that I am the Son of the Daughter of Rasool Allah (saw)? By Allah, there is no such person as Me. Tell Me, do you seek revenge for someone amongst You that I have killed, for property that I usurped, or for an injury that I had inflicted upon you?"

No one replied to Imam Husayn (asws). Then He said, "Shabath ibn Ribee, Hajjar ibn Abjar, Qays ibn Ashaat, Yazid ibn Harith, did you all not write to Me saying, "The fruit has ripened; the dates have grown green; come to an army that is ready?" They replied and said they had not written any such letter. Imam Husayn (asws) replied, "Glory be to Allah. By Allah, you most certainly have. O people since you are displeased with My presence here, allow Me to leave for any other place of security."

Qays ibn Ashaath asked, "Will You not surrender to the authority of your kinsfolk, for they will treat You as You prefer and no mistreatment will come to You from them."

Imam Husayn (asws) said, "You are the brother of Muhammad ibn Ashaath. Do you want Banu Hashim to seek retribution from you for more than the blood of Hazrat Muslim ibn Aqeel (as)? By Allah! I shall not give my hands in yours like a base man, nor shall I flee away like a slave." Then he called upon his Lord: "These are a guilty people. Surely, I take refuge with my Lord and-- your Lord from every proud one who does not believe in the day of reckoning."

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